



Confederated Tribes and Bands
of the Yakama Nation

Established by the
Treaty of June 9, 1855

January 6, 2014

Dennis McLerran, EPA Region 10 Administrator
James Woolford, EPA Superfund Director

RE: Portland Harbor Superfund cleanup

Dear Mr. McLerran and Mr. Woolford,

The Yakama Tribal Council appreciates the invitation to meet with EPA management on January 7, 2014, to discuss the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. Unfortunately, members of the Tribal Council are unable to participate in this meeting due to regularly scheduled Tribal Council and General Council sessions. Yakama Nation Fisheries management and project staff have been delegated to attend this important meeting. With this letter, I am taking the opportunity to express Yakama Nation's priorities for the cleanup of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site.

The Willamette River has always been an important food gathering area for people of the Yakama Nation, and our members still depend on this river to provide the culturally important Lamprey eel for traditional ceremonies and subsistence. The Willamette is the largest tributary to the ecologically important lower Columbia River and is a major source of its contamination. To date, the cleanup of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site has failed to take into consideration the releases of contaminants to the lower Columbia River. It is vital to clean up the lower Willamette River in order to protect the Columbia River, to support healthy natural resources in the Willamette River, and to produce fish that are safe for human consumption.

Adequate upland source control measures must be in place prior to the cleanup to protect the river from recontamination. This is simple logic and appropriate public policy to safeguard the public's interests following the cleanup. It is unclear how the EPA will evaluate the adequacy of upland source control to insure recontamination does not counteract in-water cleanup efforts.

Active remediation (removal of contaminated sediment) in the lower Willamette River should be the preferred alternative to ensure that the river more effectively reaches remedial action goals, including the long-term protection of human health and natural resources.

While costs will come into consideration when comparing cleanup alternatives, all of the alternatives considered must meet the human health and environmental protectiveness criteria with reasonable certainty and within a reasonable time frame. The cleanup must not result in institutional controls, such as fish consumption advisories, that forever restrict the public's access to its natural resources. The proximate goal for the Portland Harbor cleanup must be the removal of fish advisories, as this will signify that the public's fish are safe to eat.